

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-14 (Canceled).

Claim 15 (Currently amended): An apparatus comprising:

a shaft having open proximal and distal ends defining a lumen therethrough; ~~and~~
an inflatable bladder disposed at the distal end of the shaft and in fluid communication with the lumen, ~~wherein the inflatable bladder [[,] upon inflation [[,] is capable of separating adjacent layers of tissue thereby creating a working space and has~~ having a shape selected from the group consisting of: eccentric, conical, and wedge-shaped; ~~and~~

a cannula having a passage therethrough configured to receive the shaft and deploy the bladder at a target site in tissue, the inflatable bladder configured to separate adjacent layers of tissue when the inflatable bladder is inflated and axially moved with respect to the cannula, thereby defining a working space.

Claim 16 (Currently amended): The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the inflatable bladder does not substantially stretch when fully inflated.

Claim 17 (Previously presented): The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the inflatable bladder operates at pressures from about 10 mmHg to about 1000 mmHg.

Appl. No. 10/729,768
Amdt. dated November 28, 2005
Reply to Office Action mailed July 28, 2005

Claim 18 (Previously presented): The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the inflatable bladder operates at inflation pressures from about 100 mmHg to about 1000 mmHg.

Claim 19 (Previously presented): The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the shaft is rigid.

Claim 20 (Previously presented): The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the shaft is flexible.

Claims 21-22 (Canceled).

Claim 23 (Withdrawn): The retractor of claim 15, wherein the bladder comprises a wedge-shaped bladder.

Claim 24 (Withdrawn): The retractor of claim 23, wherein the bladder comprises a wedge-shaped bladder having an accordion structure.

Claim 25 (Withdrawn): The retractor of claim 15, wherein the bladder has an accordion structure.

Claim 26 (Canceled).